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Letter dated 19 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to you with reference to the letters from the Syrian regime's representative dated 14 February 2016 (S/2016/147) and dated 16 February 2016 (S/2016/149).

On behalf of my Government, I categorically refute all of the bogus allegations contained in the letters and their annexes. To put the record straight, I would like to share the following information on the current situation.

The crisis in Syria has been affecting Turkey significantly. We have been facing national security threats and attacks emanating from Syria since the start of the crisis, including from terrorist organizations therein. These threats have gained new dimensions and changed over time, and have always dramatically increased.

In this respect, we have announced on various occasions that we would not hesitate to exercise our inherent right of self-defence under international law. With this understanding, Turkey's determination to protect its citizens and borders was highlighted in our letter of 24 July 2015 addressed to the President of the Security Council, as well as in the letters dated 24 June 2012, 12 November 2012, 16 September 2013, 23 March 2014, 18 May 2015, 16 October 2015 and 24 November 2015.

Our rules of engagement vis-à-vis Syria, adopted on 26 June 2012, which are a concrete manifestation of our right to self-defence, in line with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, are well known by all parties and have been meticulously implemented. One of the components of the rules of engagement is retaliation in kind to fire emanating from Syrian soil. As publicly stated by the Turkish officials at the highest level, our conduct over the past few days is nothing but the full implementation of these rules.

Recently increased PYD/YPG military activity to the east of Afrin, in Tal Rifat and in Azaz has no justification whatsoever. There is no Daesh/ISIL presence in these areas. The areas in question, notably Azaz, are refuge to tens of thousands of Syrians who are internally displaced. Attacking these areas bears the risk of triggering the movement of thousands of Syrians towards our border, which will only increase our national security concerns.

PYD/YPG and PKK are the same. They share the same leadership cadres, organizational and military structure, strategies and tactics, financial resources and

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training camps. There is no room for hesitation in this regard. It is also clear that PYD/YPG is pursuing the same objectives as those of the regime and its allies.

Indeed, the author of the letters I refer to confessed that the regime he represents cooperates with and supports PYD/YPG, which is also the perpetrator of the terrorist attack that took place in Ankara on 17 February 2016. I will not distort the statements of the regime's representative, as he distorted the statements of the Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, but rather quote them for ease of reference below:

Statements of 16 February 2016 by the Syrian regime's representative in response to a question related to PYD/YPG:

> By the way, these Syrian Kurds supported by the American Administration are also supported by the Syrian Government, just for your kind information. So that victories achieved in the northern part of Syria both by the Syrian army and the Syrian Kurds are a joint victory for all the Syrians. Everybody is benefiting from the Syrian army's direct support.

As long as the violations and the threats to our security continue, we will not hesitate to exercise our rights emanating from international law in full compliance with the established rules and regulations.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit **Çevik**
Permanent Representative